

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 05481

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, EG, BE, XF
SUBJECT: SIMONET'S TRIP TO CAIRO

REF: CAIRO 8768 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. FOREIGN MINISTER SIMONET'S CHEF DE
CABINET (CAHEN), WHO ACCOMPANIED SIMONET ON HIS OFFICIAL
VISIT TO CAIRO, IDENTIFIES THREE DIFFERING POINTS OF
VIEW EXPRESSED TO SIMONET ON PRESIDENT SADAT'S MIDDLE EAST
PEACE INITIATIVE AND ITS CHANCES OF SUCCESS. END SUMMARY.

2. CAHEN SAID THAT FIRST OF THREE DIFFERING VIEWS WAS
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EXPRESSED TO SIMONET BY FOREIGN MINISTER KAMEL AND
MINISTER OF STATE BOUTROUS GHALLY. CHARACTERIZING VIEW
AS ORTHODOX AND NON-POLITICAL, CAHEN SAID KAMEL AND GHALLY
SEE THE PEACE INITIATIVE AS HERE TO STAY, BUT CONSIDER
THAT ISRAELI INTRANSIGENCE MAKES FURTHER PROGRESS
"DIFFICULT". EGYPT CANNOT BUDGE ON TWO KEY POINTS: EVA-
CUATION OF OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AS CALLED FOR BY

UN RESOLUTION 242, AND SELF-DETERMINATION FOR PALESTINIANS. THEREFORE, THE ISRAELIS MUST NOW SHOW SOME FLEXIBILITY IN THEIR POSITION IF THE PEACE INITIATIVE IS GOING TO MAINTAIN MOMENTUM. CAHEN SAID BOTH KAMEL AND GHALLY EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT DANGER OF DISAPPOINTMENT OF EGYPTIAN PUBLIC TRIGGERING A BACKLASH BUT THOUGHT PROBLEM WAS "MANAGEABLE" FOR THE TIME BEING.

3. CAHEN SAID THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE SECOND GROUP, WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED AS MORE NEGATIVE, WAS EXPRESSED TO SIMONET BY ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT MAREI AND ARAB LEAGUE SECRETARY GENERAL RIAD. THIS GROUP HOLDS THE VIEW THAT WHILE SADAT WAS INITIALLY CORRECT IN LAUNCHING HIS PEACE INITIATIVE, IT DID NOT HAVE THE NECESSARY IMPACT ON THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT, WHICH WANTS TO HAVE BOTH PEACE AND HOLD ON TO THE CONQUERED TERRITORIES. IF BEGIN'S TRIP TO WASHINGTON DOES NOT PRODUCE THE REQUIRED CHANGE IN ISRAELI POLICY, THE EGYPTIANS MUST ABANDON THE PEACE POLICY. CAHEN SAW RIAD AS MORE PESSIMISTIC THAN MAREI, VIEWING SADAT'S INITIATIVE AS DOOMED FROM THE START SINCE "GESTURES" DO NOT WORK WITH THE ISRAELIS.

4. CAHEN SAID A THIRD POSITION WAS EXPRESSED TO SIMONET BY PRESIDENT SADAT IN THEIR MEETING OF APPROXIMATELY ONE HOUR AND A HALF ON THE SAME MORNING AS THE ISRAELI REPRISAL RAIDS INTO SOUTHERN LEBANON. CAHEN SAID SADAT TOLD CONFIDENTIAL

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SIMONET THAT HE HAD CHOSEN THE PATH TOWARDS PEACE AND THAT NO MATTER WHAT NOW HAPPENS, THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE HAD BEEN CHANGED BY THE PEACE INITIATIVE AND CAN NEVER BE THE SAME AS BEFORE. SADAT TOLD SIMONET HE WILL STICK WITH THE PEACE INITIATIVE, CONVINCED THAT MIDDLE EAST PEACE IS BOUND TO COME SOME DAY. SADAT TOLD SIMONET THAT HE BELIEVES IN THE EVENTUAL EVOLUTION OF THE ISRAELI POSITION, A PROCESS HELPED ALONG BY PRESSURE ON ISRAEL BY OTHER COUNTRIES, ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT SURE THAT PRESIDENT CARTER COULD "CHANGE BEGIN." SADAT SAID HE WAS NOT UNDER ANY TIME CONSTRAINTS BUT SAW OCTOBER AS A DEADLINE FOR TESTING VIABILITY OF PEACE INITIATIVE.

5. CAHEN SAID EVERYONE THEY MET WITH IN CAIRO TALKED ABOUT SELF-DETERMINATION FOR PALESTINIANS BUT ALL ENVISION THIS THROUGH SOME SORT OF LINK WITH JORDAN. HE SAID THAT THE EGYPTIANS ARE TRYING HARD TO GET THE JORDANIANS INVOLVED IN THE PEACE PROCESS, BUT THAT THE JORDANIAN AMBASSADOR TO CAIRO TOLD HIM THAT JORDAN WON'T COME IN UNLESS ISRAEL CHANGES ITS POSITION.

6. CAHEN SAID THAT EGYPTIANS ARE URGING EUROPEANS TO

SPEAK OUT ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE, AND ADDED THAT ON THE
BASIS OF THE MUTUAL CONFIDENCE ESTABLISHED BETWEEN
SIMONET AND SADAT, SIMONET MAY HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY IN
THE CONTINUING DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE MIDDLE EAST AND EUROPE.
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